Table 6.1

***BIRD:* SCENE INDEX**

#1 **Early Days (0:00). Flashback. Scene from Bird's Childhood**
Epigraph: "There are no second acts in American lives." F. Scott Fitzgerald.
The film opens with Charlie as a little boy on a pony led through a courtyard of chickens (yardbirds) by an older boy, perhaps Charlie's older stepbrother. Charlie is playing a tune on a recorder. The scene dissolves to show an older Charlie playing the tune on an alto sax. This scene does not appear in the screenplay.

#2 ***Lester Leaps In*** **(1:59). Flashback. Reno Club in Kansas City in 1936 (1*)**
Jo Jones removes his cymbal and tosses it in the air where the camera catches it in slow motion. While the event was alleged to take place in Kansas City in 1936, the live recording is taken from a concert that took place at the Rockland Palace on September 26, 1952.

#3 **After-hours Humoring (4:09). Bird and Chan's Avenue B Apartment (New York)—Night—1954 (1)**
Bird: You're awake? I'm glad.

#4 **Bad Medicine (9:18). Bird and Chan's Kitchen. August 30, 1954 (4)**
Bird: There's no harm in getting your affairs in order—

#5 **The Substitute Is Pain (11:15). City Streets (New York)—Early Morning (6)**[1]
Heath (V.O): Case number 1540. Patient admitted to Psychiatric Pavilion at the request of wife, following suicide attempt by ingestion of iodine. Time, five A.M., September 1, 1954 (scene repeated in scene #39, "Inside the Melody").

#6 **If I'm Straight (14:18). Flashback. Room in Kansas City Hospital—Day—1936 (12)**
Caulfield [a middle-aged Black doctor]: Yeah, Charles Christopher Parker, Junior, August 29, 1920.

#7 **Special, Creative Man (17:45). Flashback. Reno Club [Kansas City]—1936 (18)**
Reno Club: Second viewing of the cymbal flying through the air in slow motion.

#8 **Mayor of 52nd Street (19:50). Flashback. Dark Bedroom—Night—1943 (20)**[2]
Phone ringing. A 19-year-old Chan, eyes still closed, reaches for it from the depths of her bed.

#9 Kansas City **(22:39). Flashback. Three Deuces on West 52nd Street—Night—1945 (22)**
Mayor ["a little man with a huge obscene cigar, self-titled the Mayor of 52nd Street]: Hey, Buster! You found a coat that fits you! Where you workin'?"
Buster [Franklin, stand in for alto saxophonist Buster Smith]: I'm back with Basie.
Flashback within a flashback. Reno Club—Night—1936 (23:08) (24)
The cutting contest in which Bird refuses to get off the stage and the third time film viewers watch a close-up of Jones's cymbal floating in the air and landing at Bird's feet "as in the shot at the beginning of the film."

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[1] This scene and many to follow, although short, contain several changes of location. The Scene Index will list the first scene location and sometimes additional scenes.
[2] The screenplay lists the date as 1943, but 1945 (or possibly late 1944) seems more likely.

#10 You'll Dig Him (26:39). Flashback. Three Deuces—Night—1945 (*Lester Leaps In*) (27)
Chan (V.O.): I remember when Don Byas left Dizzy's group.
Flashback. 59th Street Bridge—Same Night (29:20) (28)
Alto saxophonist Buster Franklin throws first his horn and then his horn case off the bridge.

#11 With Dizzy at 4 a.m. (29:38). Taxi (Moving)—Day—1954 (29)
Chan and Bird on the way home from Bellevue Hospital.
Chan: Did you know inside of three hours there was a committee formed to get you out?
Flashback. Hallway Outside Dizzy's Apartment—1945 (30).
Bird is playing "Now's the Time."
Dizzy: Who the hell are you, the Good Humor Man?

#12 In Pursuit of Chan (32:56). Flashback. Corridor Outside Dance Rehearsal Hall—New York—1945 (35)
Chan: Bird! I thought you were in Philadelphia.
Flashback 52nd Street-Night (continued).
Bird and Chan walk toward Chan's house. (37)

#13 "You stop reading my mind" (37:00). Flashback. Downstairs at Chan's House 7 West 52nd Street—Downstairs—Night—1945 (40)[3]
Bird: Doesn't your mother mind all these people using your place to cool out?

#14 Esteves and Mrs. Berg (*I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me*) (42:12). Flashback Three Deuces—Night—1945 (43)
Bird: We thank you on behalf of the band and now we're goin' to leave you in the capable hands of the Margie Hyams Quintet.

#15 Mounted Homecoming (*Why Do I Love You?, Moonlight Becomes You*) (45:35). Flashback. Chan's Room and Street Outside Chan's Room—Night--1945 (45)
Chan: Where are we going? (46)

#16 Chan's Revelation (48:15). Flashback. Chan's Room—Night (48)
Bird: I remember when I first met you.

#17 Contributing Factors (*Moose the Mooche*) (52:00) Flashback. Central Avenue (Los Angeles)—Night—1946 (51)
Heath (V.O.): Apparent contributing factors to patient's quote nervous breakdown unquote in California, winter 1946, were as follows.

#18 Bebop Invades (*Ornithology*): Red Rodney (53:00). Flashback. Parking Lot Outside Los Angeles Club (L.A.)—1946 (52)
Red: Any way I can help?

[3] In the film Chan says "You quit reading my mind!" not "You stop reading my mind," as in the scene title.

#19 Calling on Stravinsky (*Firebird Ballet*) (57:58). Apartment (Malibu)—Day—1946) (55)[4]

Bird: Listen to that. You know, Audrey, if we could really hear every sound in the world, we'd go crazy.[5]

#20 Bebop Banned (60:22). Flashback. Outside Los Angeles Club in Los Angeles (57)

Bird: What the hell happened? I wasn't *that* late.

#21 Recording Studio (*Lover Man*) (62:34). Flashback. Central Avenue (Los Angeles)—Night—July 29, 1946 (59)

Chan (V.O.): He's clean. For two reasons. First of all, the dope in L.A. dried up, so he *had to* kick.

#22 A Reunion and a Ride (66:25). Flashback. New York City Park—Day--1947 (61)

Chan: I thought the fountain of youth was in Florida.

#23 "Don't ever leave ol' papa" (71:02). Flashback. Washington Square Park—Night—1951 (66)

Chan: You missed dinner. How about supper?

#24 Glory in France (*April in Paris, All of Me*) (73:16) Flashback. "Birdland: Jazz Corner of the World"—1949 (69)

Brewster [Bird's manager] (V.O.): It's a nice, tight room. Good acoustics.

#25 Junkies Abroad (76:28). Flashback. Tate's [white-haired cornet player Benny Tate] Apartment—Night--1949 (82)

Tate [white-haired cornet player]: What the fuck you want to go back to New York for?

#26 Society Gig (*Jewish Wedding*) (79:26). Flashback. Charlie's Tavern—Day—1949 (70)

Bird: Other than that, we got nothing till a week from Friday.

#27 South with Albino Red (*One for Red*) (83:16). Flashback. Parker Avenue 3 Apartment and Red Rodney's Apartment (New York)—Night—1949 (85)

Chan [answering phone]: Hello?

Red [on phone, from his apartment]: I just want to know one thing; are you still the most gorgeous woman alive?

#28 *Now's the Time*; *Albino Red Blues* (89:01). Flashback Red's Room—1950 (90)

Red: Oh Jesus!

Bird: Yeah . . . I'd almost forgotten. Get some rest, nigger, these people want to dance.

#29 The Fix: Bird's Fault (95:18). Flashback. Doctor's Waiting Room—Day--1950 (94)

Nurse: Mr. Rodney, follow me.

#30 Back at Birdland *(Cool Blues*) (100:01). Flashback. Birdland—Night—1950 (107)

Pee Wee Marquette [MC]: Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it for the band of the century!

#31 Rodney Busted (102:49). Flashback. New York Bar—1950 (109)

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[4] The music in the background in much of this scene is from Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite,* a work that Parker loved and inspired him to compose "Yardbird Suite." *Bird* also includes a scene in which Parker and Audrey visit Stravinsky at his Los Angeles home, ring the bell, and watch as he goes to the door and stares at Bird. During his 1949 trip to Paris, Parker paid tribute to Stravinsky by quoting the opening of *Rite of Spring* in the shorter of the two Parisian recordings of the bop classic "Salt Peanuts." In addition to Stravinsky, Parker greatly appreciated Dmitri Shostakovich, Paul Hindemith, Béla Bartòk, and Edgard Varèse, and met the latter in New York.

[5] In her interview with Reisner, the sculptress and Parker's Los Angeles friend (and perhaps more) Julie MacDonald [Audrey in *Bird*] states the above paraphrase as follows: "One spring morning, amid cacophony of birds and insects, he remarked. 'If we could hear all the sounds existing, we'd soon be mad.'" Reisner (1975), 138.

Bird: You noticed anything in these last three weeks?
Red: Yeah. You're drinking more than I've ever seen you.

#32 *Laura* Montage (106:20). Flashback. Brewster's Office—Day--1950 (113)

Bird: There's *another* possibility. Like maybe a quintet isn't the right way right now.

#33 "You have a daughter (*Be My Love*) (110:10). Flashback. Parker Avenue 3 Apartment (New York)—1951 (115)

Kim [Bird's step-daughter]: We're a sandwich, Daddy. You gonna eat us up?

#34 Not the Way It Works (113:31). Flashback. Bar (Harlem)—Night—1951 (118)

Grainger [supplier]] Hey, look who's uptown!
Bird: You know where I can get me some stuff?

#35 His Song (*Parker's Mood* sung by King Pleasure on the car radio) (116:11). Flashback. Bird's Car (Moving)—On the Way to La Guardia Airport—Night-- 1951 (120)

Bird: George Brent! Maybe he'll come into the club one night! I gotta Gabby Hayes autograph last trip!

#36 Paradise (118:47). Los Angeles Beach Patio—Night—1954 (123)

Dizzy: Hey look. You got a gig?

#37 Martyr in the Making (120:37). Parker Avenue 3 Apartment (New York)—Night—1954 (125)

Chan and Mildred [Chan's mother] carrying Pree [Chan and Bird's daughter], rush down the steps and into the waiting taxi.

Malibu Beach (Los Angeles)—Same Night (126). Bird and Dizzy [Birks]

Bird: Hey, Birks? It's just you, me, and the water. Tell me the secret.

#38 Telegrams (*Parker's Mood, Ko Ko*) (123:13). Oasis Night Club (Los Angeles)—Night [1954] (127)

Bird: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your patience and once again please accept my heartfelt apologies for being unavoidably detained.

Audrey's Apartment—Same Night (128)[6]

Bird: Telegram to Mrs. Chan Parker, 151 Avenue 3, New York City.

#39 Inside the Melody (128:57). City Street (New York)—Early Morning [1954] (6)

Same as scene #5, "The Substitute is Pain" (6)

#40 Moving Out of the City (133:27). Parker Avenue 3 Apartment (New York)—Day—1954 (132)

Bird: Chan.
Chan: I was just thinking. What if we got *out* of New York for a while!

#41 Rock 'n' Roll (*Buster's Last Stand*) (136:58). 52nd Street—New York—Day—1954 (137)

Mayor: Hi Buddy.
Bird: What the hell happened here? All of the clubs turned strip joints.

#42 Showing Up Eventually (141:01). New York Studio—Night--1955 (140)

Brewster: Chan said he was driving down. Could be caught in . . .
Morello [Chubby Morello, a pianist]: Traffic, sure.

#43 Hating to Hang Up (144:03). New York Studio—Night—1955 (142)

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[6] Audrey (see Scene #19 and note 4), the name given in *Bird* for the sculptress Julie MacDonald, at the time she was with Parker, was making a wooden sculpture of his head. MacDonald was also with him when he learned about the death of Pree and sent the troubled telegrams to Chan.

Bird: Operator. This is a collect call.
Chan: Hello! Yes, I will.

#44 Nica's Doorstep (147:30). Baroness Nica de Koenigswarter's Apartment (New York)—Night—March 1955 (144)[7]

Nica: I don't think sitting up is the thing just yet.

#45 Balancing Act Over (150:15). Nica's Apartment—Living Room (March 12, 1955) (146)

Against a bluish-white background, no sound but the almost subliminal cymbal beat, a juggler goes through his pick-up brick act. Music of "Tea for Two."

#46 Coroner's Report (153:23). Nica's Apartment—Later March 12, 1955 (148)

Nica (on phone): Has Mildred come in yet, I can't reach her at home. Well, when she does, tell her to phone immediately. And tell her I need to reach Chan right away. I'll fill you in later.

#47 Coda, Dedication, and End Credits (*Parker's Mood*) (154:31). Flashback. Reno Club (149)

The cymbal is hurled through the air and crashes for the fourth and final time. SCREEN DARK, the voice of KING PLEASURE OVER END CREDITS.

Epilogue: "Charlie 'Bird' Parker died on March 12, 1955. Decades later his contribution to jazz is echoed by musicians everywhere. His legend, the music, lives on.

Chan Parker lives today in Paris, France. Her contribution to this film was invaluable. Red Rodney is actively performing today, providing an example of musical excellence and a drug-free life. Dizzy Gillespie remains today at the forefront of modern jazz. He continues to perform internationally, reaching thousands of appreciative fans. This picture is dedicated to musicians everywhere."

Note: At the time of *Bird's* release in 1988, Chan Parker (1925-1999), Red Rodney (1927-1994), and Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993) were still alive.

* Page numbers in parenthesis refer to the unpublished 1988 screenplay by Joel Oliansky (149 numbered pages).

[7] Baroness Pannonica "Nica" de Koenigswarter is listed as Mrs. Leopold in the screenplay.